

Message Text

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PAGE 01 NOUAKC 02339 080302Z
ACTION AF-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-05 H-01 INR-07
L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15
USIA-06 CAB-02 COME-00 DOTE-00 EB-08 FAA-00 OMB-01
TRSE-00 IO-13 SY-05 MCT-01 /087 W
-----008298 080310Z /63

R 071500Z OCT 77
FM AMEMBASSY NOUAKCHOTT
TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 8242
INFO AMEMBASSY DAKAR

C O N F I D E N T I A L NOUAKCHOTT 2339

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: EAIR, PINS, ASEC, MR
SUBJECT: SECURITY AT NOUAKCHOTT AIRPORT

REF: (A) STATE 187948, (B) 76 NOUAKCHOTT 2276, (C) 76 STATE 212490
(D) STATE 167219

1. MAURITANIAN GOVERNMENT (GIRM) TRANSPORTATION, CONSTRUCTION, AND SECURITY MINISTRIES WITH HELP OF DAKAR ARCHITECT ARE PUTTING IN TOUCHES ON DESIGN FOR EXPANSION AND UP-GRADING OF NOUAKCHOTT AIRPORT TERMINAL BUILDING. AIRPORT TERMINAL IS BEING ENLARGED AND IMPROVED IN ORDER TO HANDLE SUBSTANTIALLY INCREASED NUMBERS OF AIRLINE PASSENGIERS ANTICIPATED WITH ARRIVAL OF LONG-RANGE JET TRANSPORT AIRCRAFT MADE POSSIBLE BY RESURFACING AND LENGTHENING OF PRESENT RUNWAY (FROM 2000 METERS TO 3000 METERS). RUNWAY CONSTRUCTION SLATED FOR COMPLETIONCSRCH 1978.) TERMINAL BUILDING EXTENSION HAS BEENPLANNED BY ASECNA IN CONSULTATION WITH GIRM GICIL AVIATION, POLICE, AND CUSTOMS AUTHORITIES PLUS REPRESENTATIVES OF THREE AIRLINES SERVICING NOUAKCHOTT (AIR MAURITANIE, AIR AFRIQUE, AIR SENEGAL). (ASECNA IS FRENCH-RUN AERIAL NAVIGATION AND COMMUNICATIONS ORGANIZATION WHICH SEVERAL YEARS AGO PREPARED UNUSED-- AND UNUSABLE -- PLANS FOR "INTERNATIONAL" CLASS AIRPORT 24 KM NORTH OF CAPITAL CITY.)

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2. AFTER CONFIRMING EXISTENCE AIRPORT TERMINAL PROJECT (PREVIOUSLY REPORTED BY AIR AFRIQUE REP) WITH GIRM CIVIL AVIATION OFFICIAL OCTOBER 3, AMBASSADOR ASKED WHETHER GIRM OR ASECNA HAD OBTAINED EXPERT HELP IN AIRPORT SECURITY FROM FRENCH OR OTHER QULAIFIED AND RECOGNIZED SPECIALIST. AMBASSADOR RECALLED USG HAD INFORMED GIRM YEAR AGO OF ITS WILLINGESS TO HELP GIRM

IMPROVE SECURITY AT NOUAKCHOTT AIRPORT (REF B), AND SPECIFICALLY HAD OFFERED TO MAKE FAA SECURITY EXPERT AVAILABLE OR PROVIDE TRAINING SPACES IN FAA STATESIDE COURSES FOR GIRM PERSONNEL. HE NOTED THEN ONGOING JAPAN AIRLINE AND AIR FRANCE HIJACKINGS; OBSERVED SECURITY AT NOUAKCHOTT AIRPORT -- PHYSICAL AND OPERATIONAL- WAMNON-EXISTENT; AND SUGGESTED THAT GIRM SHOULD TAKE ADVANTAGE OF AIRPORT EXPANSION PROJECT TO MAKE SIGNIFICANT IMPROVEMENT IN SECURITY SITUATION. CIVAIR OFFICIALS, BY NOW MARKEDLY LESS SURE OF GIRM'S DO-IT-YOURSELF APPROACH, INDICATED HE INTENDED TO LOOK INTO ADEQUACY OF SECURITY PLANNING FOR TERMINAL PROJECT.

3. AMBASSADOR RAISED TERMINAL EXPANSION PROJECT, LAMENTABLE SECURITY SITUATION IN EXISTING TERMINAL BUILDING, AND ADEQUACY OF SECURITY PLANNING IN DESIGNS OF NEW TERMINAL WITH INTERIOR MINISTER (AND FORMER MINISTER TRANSPORTATION) MOUJTABA OULD MUHAMMED FALL OCTOBER 5. POINTING TO SIGNIFICANT INCREASE IN AIRCRAFT HIJACKINGS IN 1977 (CITING STATISTICS REF D). NOTING JUST CONCLUDED JAL AND AFHHIJACKINGS UNDERSCORING PRESENT UNACCEPTABLE SECURITY SITUATION AT NOUAKCHOTT AIRPORT, AMBASSADOR INQUIRED WHETHER TERMINAL EXPANSION DESIGNS REFLECTED ANALYSIS AND ADVICE OF AIRPORT SECURITY EXPERT. MINISTER EXPRESSED CONFIDENCE RE ADEQUACY OF SECURITY PLANNING IN TERMINAL PROJECT, AND DESCRIBED WIDE RANGE OF POLICE, CUSTOMS, AND CIVAIR PERSONNEL WHO HAD BEEN INVOLVED. IN ENUSING DISCUSSION, AMBASSADOR EMPHASIZED NEED FOR REAL SECURITY EXPERTISE AND EXPERIENCE AND GENTLY QUESTIONED EXPERT STATUS OF LOCAL CONFIDENTIAL

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ASECNA STAFF, RECALLED THAT USG HAD PREVIOUSLY OFFERED GIRM ASSISTANCE OF FAA AIRPORT SECURITY EXPERT, AND EXPRESSED CONFIDENCE THAT USG WOULD BE PREPARED TO MAKE EXPERT AVAILABLE NOW BEFORE DESIGN FOR NEW TERMINAL BUILDING WAS COMPLETELY LOCKED IN (ON BASIS USG WOULD MAKE EXPERT AVAILABLE ANDPAY SALARY IF GIRM PPAID TRANSPORT AND EXPENSES). IN ADDITION, AMBASSADOR DESCRIBED HIGHLY SUCCESSFUL TRAINING COURSE FAA RAN LAST YEAR FOR WEST AFRICAN AIRPORT SECURITY CHIEFS, OBSERVED SENEGALESE IN CHARGE OF DAKAR AIRPORT SECURITY WAS ONE OF STAR PUPILS, AND SUGGESTED GIRM MIGHT WISH CONSIDER ALTERNATIVE OF SEEKING EXPERTISE OF FAA GRADUATE IN DAKAR. BY END OF DISCUSSION, MINISTER HAD DECIDED HE HAD BETTER TAKE ANOTHER LOOK AT PROBLEM.

4. IN VIEW OF SUBSTANTIAL AND STEADILY INCREASING NUMBERS OF USG EMPLOYEES WHO PASS THROUGH NOUAKCHOTT AIRPORT TERMINAL, QUESTION OF SECURITY AT THIS AIRPORT IS OF DIRECT AND MAJOR INTEREST TO USG AND TO THIS DIPLOMATIC MISSION. WOULD MUCH APPRECIATE LEARNING SOONEST WHETHER USG WOULD ACCORDINGLY BE PREPARED TO "SWEETEN " TERMS OF OFFER OF FAA SECURITY EXPERT (PERHAPS BY AGREEING TO PAY HIS ROUND TRIP AIR TRANSPORTATION IN ADDITION TO HIS SALARY) IN ORDER TO INSURE ADEQUACY OF

SECURITY PLANNING IN TERMINAL EXPANSION PROJECT. EVEN THOUGH
GIRM'S DAKAR ARCHITECT HAS ALREADY BEGUN WORK ON PREPARATION
FINAL PLANS, OFFER OF TECHNICALLY QUALIFIED AND EXPERIENCED US
FAA SECURITY EXPERT FOR COST OF LOCAL SUBSISTENCE MIGHT PERSUADE
GIRM OFFICIALS TO REEXAMINE TIMETABLE AND ACCEPT ANY RESWHTING
SLIPPAGE IN SCHEDULE. IF GIRM -- AND WE -- MISS THIS OPPORT-
UNITY TO MAKE SIGNIFICANT IMPROVEMENT IN SECURITY POSTURE OF
NOUAKCHOTT AIRPORT, WE WILL NOT GET ANOTHER CHANCE UNTIL NEW
NOUAKCHOTT INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT IS DESIGNED AND BUILT AT
COPPOLANI 10-12 YEARS FROM NOW.

HANDYSIDE

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Message Attributes

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Copy: SINGLE
Sent Date: 07-Oct-1977 12:00:00 am
Decaption Date: 01-Jan-1960 12:00:00 am
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Disposition Approved on Date:
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